



SUCCESS STORY

PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT

OFFICE

U. S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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NOT JUST MAKIN' MUSIC

Many people have, at some time, had a dream of owning a business. Each has ideas for developing or adapting new products or service businesses. Quite frequently, these ideas never make it out of the mind and into the marketplace.

However, this is not the case with Kim Fink of Makin' Music Rockin' Rhythms, located in Media, Delaware County. In 1992 Kim left a career in medical management to launch her business, Sage Entertainment Inc., a Pennsylvania based company that creates and teaches music enrichment programs targeted to young children.

Kim grew up in a family of music lovers. She started playing the guitar at 10. Later she and her sister formed their own children's band that they named "Peanut Butter and Jelly" and performed for five years. It was this strong connection to music that led Fink to follow her dream in the field of music.

After finding existing materials and products available on the market "too boring" to engage parents and children, Fink decided to create her own curriculum. She teamed up with songwriter Janine Kelly, and produced their own line of CDs and audiocassettes under the "Makin' Music Rockin' Rhythms" label.

The recordings feature original compositions and seasonal and traditional songs. Their mix of music is geared to be interactive, incorporating hand movements, chants and simple instruments, such as castanets and bongos.

Sage Entertainment has grown to four company-owned schools and 13 licensees teaching its curriculum in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Delaware and New Jersey and generating about \$575,000 in revenue.

Fink's vision is to grow her business by expanding distribution of her product. "We have a great product," she says. Sage Entertainment has won numerous awards. "But we need to get our product out more to get to the next level." In 2002 with growth in mind, Fink approached the Philadelphia Women's Business Development Center (WBDC). The WBDC was able to assist Fink through the FastTrac class.

FastTrac is a practical, effective business development program designed to help entrepreneurs grow their ventures and make them soar. The program guides the participant through the process of developing a viable business plan for their venture. The 11-session training program focuses on improving the operations of existing businesses.

Fink is grateful for the assistance she received from the WBDC. She took the FastTrac course and began to write a formal business plan. "I had never really sat down and thought about how to expand--before it just happened," Fink says. "But then we hit a plateau, and I didn't know where to go from there." "Writing the plan helped me decide where we need to concentrate our efforts." "I had never written a business plan until I attended the FastTrac program. It was a real "eye-opener" for me and made me look at my business in a whole different light."

With her new strategies for growth, Fink plans to take Sage Entertainment Inc., from annual revenues of \$575,000 to more than \$1 million the next year – as opposed to recent increases of \$50,000-\$75,000 per year. "People have told me that I'm sitting on a goldmine, and it's frustrating when your company isn't producing the type of income you think it's capable of," Fink says.

The Philadelphia Women's Business Development Center, a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration, provides free counseling and assistance to women business owners and prospective business owners. The Center is located at 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1116, Philadelphia, PA. The phone number is 215-790-9232.

The U.S. Small Business Administration, established in 1953, provides financial, technical, and management assistance to help American start, run, and grow their businesses. With a portfolio of business loans, loan guarantees, and disaster loans worth more than \$50 billion, SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. For more information on SBA programs and services, call the Philadelphia District Office at (215) 580-2722 or visit their Web site at www.sba.gov/pa/phil. All of SBA's programs and services are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.